

# *Upper Western Shore Tributary Team*

## **About the Watershed:**

The Upper Western Shore Watershed encompasses 920 square miles and includes all of Harford County and parts of Cecil, Baltimore, and Carroll Counties. The watershed contains rivers that have a direct impact on the Chesapeake Bay, human health, and ecological life. It includes the Susquehanna River, which provides 50% of the Chesapeake Bay's freshwater input; the Loch Raven and Prettyboy Reservoirs, which are drinking water resources for the Baltimore metropolitan area; and the Bush, Bird, Middle, and Gunpowder Rivers. The watershed contains a mix of urban, suburban, and agricultural land uses. As a result, the team seeks to strike a balance between preserving sensitive ecological areas while maintaining a viable agricultural community and reducing the impacts of growth.

## **About the Team:**

The Upper Western Shore Tributary Team has a steady volunteer base dedicated to achieving their Tributary Strategy goals. The mission of the team is to meet Chesapeake Bay Agreement nutrient and sediment reduction and habitat restoration goals in the Upper Western Shore Watershed through partnerships, education, and community participation. The team is composed of a diverse group of members, including watershed organizations; farmers; educators; scientists; and federal, state, and local governments, who bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the team. The team maintains a workgroup structure that meets during and outside team meetings to achieve team goals. The team's goals include seeking legislative and policy changes at the state and local level, implementing restoration projects, fostering environmental stewardship, and engaging and educating residents about their watershed.

## **2001-2002 Accomplishments:**

Much of the Upper Western Shore Team's focus in 2001 and 2002 was spent preparing for the revision of the Upper Western Shore Tributary Strategy and educating the team about current conditions and priorities in their watershed. Stan Kollar served as team chair throughout most of this time period with Pat Pudelnkewicz as vice-chair. In November 2002, Pat Pudelnkewicz was nominated to assume the chairmanship of the team with Skip Pieper as vice-chair.

Several meetings in 2001 and 2002 focused on the Tributary Strategies development process and components. Other meetings focused on watershed-specific information and priorities, such as discussing Smart Growth with local developer Clark Turner; reviewing Harford County Envirothon presentations; learning about Baltimore County's watershed management program, impervious surface and its impacts, and storm sewer overflows in the Upper Western Shore Watershed; and holding a discussion forum with Senator Nancy Jacobs to talk about how to work effectively with state and local elected officials.

The team also sought to expand its membership diversity and engage missing stakeholders on the team. The team developed a stakeholder list, regularly publicized their meetings on ComCast Cable Connections, and exhibited at local events, such as the Harford County Farm Day and North Harford High School Earth Day. Because several of the rivers in the Upper Western Shore watershed extend into Pennsylvania, the team worked to establish connections with its Pennsylvania watershed stakeholders in 2001 and 2002, including the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the York County Conservation District. To strengthen these connections, the team held regular meetings in Cecil County and invited the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Cecil County representatives, and the York County Conservation District to give presentations to

the team about their efforts and programs. As a result, membership and team activities increased, particularly in the northeastern portion of the watershed.

- ✳ The Upper Western Shore Team's Wade-In has become the team's major public outreach and education event. Senator Bernie Fowler established wade-ins to raise awareness about water clarity and local tributaries. Participants measure water clarity by wearing white sneakers and wading into the water until they can no longer see their feet. The Upper Western Shore Wade-In is held every year on the first Saturday in June at the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center. In 2001, the team established a partnership with the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company to hold a wade-in T-shirt design contest. Contest designs were submitted by people of all ages from all over the Upper Western Shore Watershed. At the wade-in, the T-shirts were given to the more than 250 participants. The team renewed its partnership with the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company in 2002 to hold a second design contest, resulting in more than 150 design submissions and more than 300 attendees at the wade-in. The wade-ins also included live music, canoeing, fish seining, and a variety of educational and hands-on exhibits. State and local elected officials help lead the wade-in and measure the local water quality. Participants in 2001 and 2002 included then-Congressman Robert Erhlich, Senator Nancy Jacobs, Delegate Mary-Dulany James, and Harford County Executive Jim Harkins.
- ✳ Throughout 2001 and into 2002, the team's Agriculture Workgroup sought to address and resolve issues associated with the prioritization, implementation, and funding of nutrient management plans. The workgroup encouraged the state to study the impacts of wildlife populations on nutrient enrichment and incorporate these data into the Chesapeake Bay nutrient reduction goals. They also encouraged the Maryland Department of Agriculture to expand their farmer education programs for nutrient management and proper soil sampling techniques. Team members met several times with Maryland Department of Agriculture representatives to voice their concerns and recommendations. They also brought their issues before the Governor's Bay Cabinet in May 2001 and before the Governor at their May 16, 2002 meeting. As a result of these efforts, the Maryland Department of Agriculture established a certification program for farmers to prepare their own nutrient management plans and developed an education program to teach farmers how to test their soils.
- ✳ On February 24, 2001, several Upper Western Shore Tributary Team members participated in the Cecil County Conservation Forum to lay the groundwork for developing a watershed plan for the Octoraro Watershed – one of Maryland's more pristine watersheds that supports native brook trout populations. More than 75 participants attended the workshop, including county staff, leaders from key stakeholder groups, and elected officials. Team members spoke at and participated in the follow-on forum that was held on March 9, 2002. Since these forums, a team member represents the team on the Partnership for Cecil County meetings to assist in the watershed plan's development and implementation.
- ✳ Upper Western Shore Team members participated in the Cecil County Site Planning Roundtable, which started on March 21, 2001 and was completed and presented to the Cecil County Council in August 2001. The goal of the roundtable was to revise existing development codes and ordinances to promote development that has less impact on local water resources.
- ✳ During March and April of 2001, Upper Western Shore Team members volunteered for Maryland's Stream Waders Program. Through this program, team members collected samples of macrobenthic invertebrates, or bug larvae, in Deer Creek subwatersheds. They submitted their samples to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources who identified the larvae and incorporated the information into the Maryland Biological Stream Survey database.
- ✳ On April 22, 2001, the *Baltimore Sun* insert "Picture Maryland – Where Do We Grow From Here?" was published and distributed to more than one million Marylanders to educate them about growth issues and the protection of Maryland's natural resources. Several Upper Western Shore Team members

participated in the Public Outreach Cross-Team Workgroup to develop and make this publication possible. The final products included a 32-page booklet that was circulated with the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper, an extensive webpage on the *Baltimore Sun's Sunspot*, and a companion Teacher's Resource Booklet that was distributed to more than 600 classrooms.

- ✧ On June 15, 2001 and June 14, 2002, the Upper Western Shore Tributary Team helped to coordinate and participate in the annual water chestnut harvest of the Bird River. This harvest is used to keep an exotic, highly invasive species from overtaking native submerged aquatic vegetation species in the river.
- ✧ In 2001, Harford County was awarded a grant by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to prepare a Bush River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). The WRAS is a partnership between the county and the state to assess the watershed, identify problem areas, and to develop a restoration strategy. Several Upper Western Shore Team members are participating in the strategy development, and the team plans to assist with the strategy's implementation once it is finalized.
- ✧ On September 20, 2001, the team hosted a stakeholders' meeting with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources at Harford Community College to identify data resources to prepare the Upper Western Shore Basin Report.
- ✧ In 2001, the team wrote letters to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in support of the Dulaney Branch Bog Turtle Habitat restoration project and the Bush River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy proposal. The team also sent a letter to the Maryland Department of the Environment with review comments on the draft document *The Maryland Standards and Specifications for Forest Harvest Operations*.
- ✧ In December 2001, the team sent letters to homeowner associations offering assistance with community restoration projects. The Amyclae Homeowners Association in Bel Air responded. Since then, team members have been working with the community and county government to obtain funding and volunteers for reforestation, BayScapes, and stormwater improvement projects.
- ✧ On April 6, 2002, Upper Western Shore Tributary Team members assisted in the Dulaney Valley project, which was coordinated by the Key Club and the Gunpowder Conservancy, to restore bog turtle habitat. More than 75 volunteers came out to help plant 175 trees, 215 tree tubes, and 800 bog plants.
- ✧ On September 18, 2002, the team partnered with the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Management, the Natural Renewable Resources Foundation, and the Patapsco/Back Tributary Team to hold a bus tour of Baltimore County non-point source abatement demonstration sites. Approximately 50 people participated in the tour that showcased the county's watershed management program and highlighted urban, suburban, and agricultural non-point source pollution reduction treatments.
- ✧ In recognition of the role that the Upper Western Shore Team played in encouraging the Town of Havre de Grace to employ biological nutrient removal (BNR) in their wastewater treatment plant, the town and the Maryland Department of the Environment invited the team to participate in its November 1, 2002 BNR completion ceremonies.
- ✧ Starting in August 2002, Upper Western Shore Team members began to participate in the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's meetings to learn about and comment on challenges, issues, and initiatives in the Susquehanna River basin. On September 26, 2002, team members participated in a focus session entitled *Reducing Water Demand Through Water Conservation and Reuse*. The purpose of this focus group was to address the impacts of the 2002 drought on the lower Susquehanna River basin and on water consumption.

### **2003 Priorities:**

At the close of 2002, the team spent its final meetings of the year outlining its 2003 workplan. The team decided to streamline its workgroup structure into three workgroups – Agriculture, Developed Lands, and Public Outreach and Education. Overall initiatives for the team in 2003 included developing the Upper Western Shore Tributary Strategy and holding public meetings to educate and engage new people in the implementation of the Upper Western Shore Tributary Strategy. The team also set as a priority to educate and involve the new Governor and the new Administration's Bay Cabinet on the Tributary Teams. Another overall initiative for the team is to continue to expand the team's involvement, outreach, and membership into Cecil County and other areas of the watershed where participation in the Tributary Strategy effort is lacking.

The Agriculture Workgroup set a number of priorities to accomplish in 2003. The workgroup decided to continue to seek improvements to the nutrient management plan law, promote the implementation of the Farm Bill, coordinate an agriculture tour, hold a farm visitation day, promote the Maryland Department of Agriculture's best management practice inventory, and support implementation of agriculture best management practices, especially the outsourcing of agriculture wastes.

The team's Developed Lands Workgroup identified two major initiatives for its 2003 workplan. The group plans to conduct an analysis of development trends, threats, and sprawl management in the watershed and to conduct educational outreach to urban residents of Bay-friendly homecare practices.

The Public Outreach and Education Workgroup developed an ambitious 2003 workplan. Their workplan includes coordinating a successful 2003 wade-in; supporting the Bush River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy; developing a presentation to educate elected officials and other stakeholders about the watershed and the team; developing an Upper Western Shore brochure; supporting the Green Schools, Bay Schools, and Chesapeake Classrooms programs; working with the Watershed Alliance of York to hold a Watershed Tour; and promoting stakeholder review and involvement in the new Upper Western Shore Tributary Strategy.

The team award recognizes the team member who has made significant contributions to the team and the watershed. Team members and participants nominate the awardee and final determinations are made by the chair and vice-chair of the team. The awardee receives a Governor's citation at the annual meeting and press releases of their award and contributions are distributed to their local and state newspapers.

### **2001 Team Awardee**

At the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Tributary Team Meeting held on February 23, 2002, Dr. James Bailey was awarded the 2001 Upper Western Shore Team Award. "Doc" was recognized for his active participation in representing the team on Maryland's Tracking Workgroup, Octoraro Watershed initiatives, and the Bush River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy. He was also commended for his work at Aberdeen Proving Ground to manage the natural resources of the installation, coordinate the installation's Chesapeake Bay initiatives, oversee the Proving Ground's submerged aquatic vegetation restoration and monitoring program, establish partnerships with local communities to develop watershed management plans for Winter's Run and Swan Creek, and help ensure the successful transfer of the installation's wastewater treatment plant to the Town of Aberdeen. Finally, he was recognized for educating the team and keeping the team abreast of issues associated with Atkisson Dam.

### **2002 Team Awardee**

Don Outen was awarded the 2002 Upper Western Shore Team Award at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tributary Team Meeting that was held on February 1, 2003. Don was recognized for his long-standing commitment to Maryland's Tributary Teams as demonstrated by his participation in numerous activities and committees that have benefited from his extensive knowledge in land use and environmental protection. He was also nominated for his contributions to make Baltimore County one of the pillars of Smart Growth within Maryland and for his

dedication to watershed planning and management, including numerous stream restoration projects throughout the county. Don was also acknowledged for representing urban interests on the Tributary Team and for being a strong voice in seeing that urban nutrient loads are properly incorporated into the Bay Model. Finally, he was recognized for organizing a successful Tributary Team bus tour of urban, suburban, and rural non-point source remediation demonstration sites in September of 2002.

**For More Information:**

For more information, contact Susan Phelps Larcher, team coordinator, at 410-260-8832. You can also visit our website at [www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat/).